NEW SERIAL—"THE OUTLAWS OF THE AIR"
(By GEORGE GRIFFITH, Author of "The Angel of the Revolution," and "The Syren of the Skies.")

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 301. FOR WEEK ENDING OCTOBER 6, 1894. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

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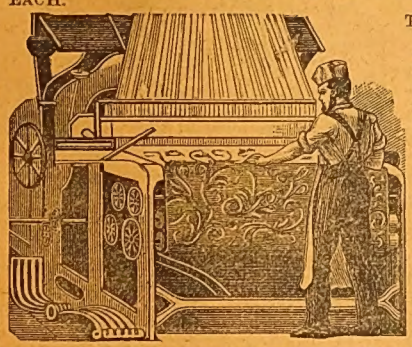

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M. Lock writes:—"I received the Carpets, Rugs, and Blankets quite safe on Monday. I really did not expect to see such beautiful Carpets, it was quite a surprise to me. If I have an opportunity of recommending them I will do so with pleasure, for the Company deserve it."

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MILD IN OPERATION, PERFECTLY SAFE, AND FREE FROM INJURIOUS DRUGS.

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Can be obtained for 6d., plus a pound or two of Sugar and a little Yeast.

THE FINEST BEVERAGE IN THE WORLD.

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If unable to obtain it in your neighbourhood, send 9 stamps for sample bottle; or samples of both Wine Essence and Extract of Herbs, post free for 15 stamps.

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Especially to those who wish to know of a safe, certain, and speedy remedy for all irregularities and obstructions, a remedy which, under the most trying circumstances and in the most difficult and
OBSTINATE CASES,
NEVER FAILS TO AFFORD RELIEF,
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No case hopeless, failure is simply impossible, as Mrs. Snow, of Denmark Hill, Camberwell, writes:—
"By adopting your treatment my anxiety and misery was over within twenty-four hours, although I had been daily taking pills and other things in vain. Half the quantity you sent proved effective, to my intense joy and surprise.
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26 GUINEAS (*Net Cash Price*).

This Piano is confidently recommended as the very best instrument ever produced at the money. For beauty and resonance of sound, for delicacy and brilliancy of touch, for exquisite modulation and the perfection of workmanship it cannot be excelled. It has all the latest improvements, including entire Iron Frame (suspended), Harmonic Bar, Best Check Action, Double Covered Machine Hammers, Bushed Keys, &c., Marqueterie or Chased Gilt Embossed Panels and Gilded Bracket Trusses. Supplied in Walnut, Rosewood, or Ebonised, and the net cash price is 26 Guineas. Inspection and trial is invited.

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HANLEY,

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100 Pieces for £1 1s. 0d.

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Thousands sold all over the world. Everybody not only satisfied but amazed at the quantity and quality given.

Hundreds of these packages are applied for as **Wedding or Birthday Presents.** And what more useful present can be given? Every item is useful.

The Thirty Shilling Bazaar Parcel is Selling well. Apply at once.

Send a Post-card for Particulars. You will never regret it. Freedom from breakage guaranteed. All letters to the **PEARSON POTTERY CO., HANLEY.**

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Collins' Marvellous Female Remedy.

Mr. COLLINS (who was 30 years a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England), will forward free of Charge, full PARTICULARS of a REMEDY, which during an extensive practice both at home and in the Colonies, he has never known to fail in the most OBSTINATE CASES of OBSTRUCTION and IRREGULARITIES. Send addressed envelope for full particulars, and waste no more time and money on useless Pills and so-called Remedies, &c., which, in the majority of cases, are nothing but PURGATIVES, and cause SICKNESS, PROSTRATION, and PAIN, without having the desired effect.

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SHORT STORIES.

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON.

No. 301. *FOR THE WEEK ENDING OCTOBER 6, 1894.* [PRICE ONE PENNY.

EVERYBODY knows the story of Orpheus, and nobody believes it! I hold that everybody is wrong. If there is anything incredible in that story, it is that the son of Oeagrus should have preferred death to the love of the Bacchantes, who were beautiful creatures, if we may believe the paintings which represent them.

I have always believed firmly in the wonderful power of Orpheus's songs to charm beasts and even make the rocks weep; for I have seen the spell wrought by music on a larger scale than one sees every evening at the opera, and the thousand witnesses, brothers in arms of the modern Orpheus, whose history I am going to relate, could affirm the same thing.

In 1830, Hussein-Pasha, the Dey of Algeria, in an impatient manner, easily explained, perhaps, but decidedly blamable, slapped the face of our Chargé d'Affaires with his fly-flap. He was dethroned by France, who took possession of the provinces of Algeria, Constantine, and Oran. Nothing could be more natural or more just! But twenty-five years later, in 1855, we had not yet been able to make the Kabyles understand it.

They absurdly maintained that they were not responsible for the acts of the Dey; that if he had been a little hasty it was not their fault, and they did not see why their country should be invaded and a tax levied on their cattle; or that they should pay tribute, especially the tribute of blood, to assist the Christians against their own Mahommedan brothers under the fallacious pretext that Hussein-Pasha (whom the greater part of them had never seen) had struck M. Arago in the face with a small bunch of feathers—which really could not have hurt him very much!

But France maintained that behind the material fact were the consequences, behind the gesture was the insult, that her honour demanded her to kill a hundred thousand men on both sides and conquer Algeria, if it were only to teach good manners to these barbarians and compel them to pay tribute.

It was precisely this which the Kabyles would not understand, and that is why we set out for Constantine—ten thousand infantry, cavalry and artillery—with the intention, as charitable as civilised, of enlightening them as to the reality of our rights and the superiority of our institutions.

But if the Kabyles are dull of understanding, they have a quick eye and are prompt to act. If they were not our enemies I should say that, while leading the simple life of pastoral people of olden times, they have retained their virtues, preserved the pride and courage of free men, and are formidable in combat when one dares attack them in their own mountains. We soon experienced this. Scarcely had we passed the Oued-Rummel when the struggle began. For a month our march was only a succession of skirmishes and night attacks through the passes which furrowed this mountainous country, encounters in which we always lost more men than the enemy.

In the plain we were suffocated with the heat and died of thirst; on the mountain we froze, and often had to open up a road through the snow. As soon as our columns separated, in order to pass a defile or a ravine, a discharge of musketry burst above our heads; from every crevice in the rock came a shot; the brushwood crackled under our feet. Our sharpshooters, the Zouaves, climbed the rocks to dislodge the Kabyles, but they bounded like chamois from crest to crest, returning the fire of our soldiers, whose bodies rolled from top to bottom of the ravine, almost under our horses' feet. Sometimes it was an Arab who fell in our midst, and expired crying, "There is one God." If he could not speak, he fixed on us a look grave and menacing, raised his finger to make the supreme profession of faith, and his brave soul took its flight towards his one God.

We had been a month on the way to Constantine, advancing slowly, on account of the enormous convoy which followed us, the men almost exhausted by incessant skirmishes, and the General, anxious perhaps as to the result of the expedition, decidedly in a bad humour. The principal cause of delay in a march, which ought to have been as rapid as possible over the mountains, was a flock of five thousand sheep; therefore the General resolved to abandon them. In order that they might not say he had lost them, he decided to leave them in charge of one of the Zephyrs. He chose a man from this corps, because he was convinced, as we all were, that the poor devil would be killed, and the sheep would be carried off as soon as we were gone. He preferred to sacrifice a Zephyr to a Grenadier or a Zouave.

The battalion of Zephyrs, whose real name is the African Battalion, is formed exclusively of scapegoats. It is not composed of robbers or murderers, but all the undisciplined or insubordinate of the army are sent to the Zephyrs, or "Joyfuls," as they call themselves. They are usually intelligent, and if it be true that a Zouave is as brave as one lion, it may be said that a Zephyr is as brave as two! In a profession where discipline and passive obedience are the first requirements of order and the essential conditions of success, these independent natures, indifferent to punishment, for they often avenge themselves by a cutting witticism, are considered dangerous, so they are sent to the African Battalion. On account of their reputation for bravery, they are always placed in the front rank during any particularly dangerous engagement.

Thus the hundred and twenty-three men who defended Mazagran for three days against an army of eight thousand

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Arabs, who were unable to gain possession of the village, were Zephyrs, commanded by Captain Lelièvre.

We were about to resume our march, after passing the night in a valley covered with the long, furze-like grass peculiar to this country, when the General called the Commander of the Zephyrs, and told him to appoint a man from his battalion to tend the sheep, which he had decided to leave in this spot until our return—in three months! "Give him," he added, "an ample supply of biscuit, rice, and coffee, and he can kill a sheep when he needs it; we will call for him on our way back."

I do not know whether there was irony in his remark, but I am loath to believe it, for it would have been cruel. The Commander could not repress a smile, but he made no observation, saluted, and rejoined his battalion, which was awaiting the order to march.

He passed slowly in front of his troop, looking at each man as if asking on which the choice should fall, for he believed he was condemning to death the one he selected. At length he stopped and called "Fusilier Carette." A boy of twenty-two or twenty-three years, tall but solidly built, with short

Halting in front of the officer, he presented arms.

nose, square chin, large forehead surmounted by light curly hair, mischievous blue eyes, and laughing mouth, stepped out of the ranks and replied "present." Halting in front of the officer, he presented arms and stood looking him full in the face.

The latter delivered the general's order, and in spite of the ordinary harshness of his manner, he could not conceal a certain emotion which touched the soldier. When his comrades heard the order given, a murmur of insubordination ran from right to left of the company, and whispered protestations, which the officers feigned not to hear in order not to punish. They might have expected it! Carette, for numerous reasons, was greatly beloved by all his companions. Among the "Joyfuls" Carette was the joyful *par excellence*. In his youth, which had been very varied, he had first been one of a troop of mountebanks, then he had travelled with a dentist, and thanks to his wanderings with this charlatan, he had made a considerable collection of puns and jokes which had an enormous success in Africa. He also pretended to certain surgical knowledge, and his talent as a prestidigitator delighted the Zephyrs.

Moreover, he had a fine voice and played the hautboy in a manner that the "Joyfuls" pronounced remarkable, especially when it constituted the orchestra at one of the soldiers' balls. In short, not one among all this undisciplined band was more unruly than Carette. His repartee, often clever, always saucy, enlivened the whole battalion, and when any joke was organised, Carette was always the author or instigator. It was probably for all these reasons that the commander honoured him with his choice.

When the column began its march more than one among these fearless men was moved when he took leave of this gay comrade, and each one wanted to shake his hand and say farewell in some form or other. "Good-bye, Carette." "Good-bye, old man." "You're a sharp fellow," said another, "but keep your eye open."

"Have no fear," replied the poor boy, greatly touched by these proofs of sympathy, "you will find me here when you come back."

But when the last waggon had passed and the last man had disappeared in the ravine, when he found himself alone, surrounded only by the sheep, dreary thoughts began to assail him.

He had a vague intuition of the grandeur and sacredness of duty and understood the necessity of discipline, that mystic bond which united all his companions in an invincible whole whilst he remained alone, isolated, probably lost for having discarded, like a heavy yoke, the necessary order and discipline.

But "Joyful's" mind could not long remain occupied with serious thoughts, so raising his head, he said with a smile, "Won't the others be surprised if they find me here with my sheep when they come back? And the Commander," said he, laughing heartily, "how astonished he will be." Then looking at the sheep scattered on the plain, grazing like Madame Deshoulière's lambs on the tranquil banks of the Linod, he added, "All the same, I shall be confoundedly bored here for three months." Suddenly a bright idea occurred to him; he would train one of his pensioners and make a learned sheep of him! Afterwards he busied himself in preparing a shelter for the night, which he tried to make as solid as possible, propping the *gourbi* (a hut made of branches and brushwood) against a rock, and strengthening it as well as he could with the materials at his disposal. This took some time. When he saw the sun sink on the horizon, he made a tour of the little plain where he had been abandoned. Seeing nothing to make him anxious, his mind was at ease, and he began to prepare his evening meal, whistling gaily.

The night had come—a calm night, silent and serene, such as one only sees in the desert; there was not a cloud in the sky, and the moon, which on account of the purity and transparency of the atmosphere, appears larger and more brilliant than any other part of the earth, seemed enthroned in the midst of a host of stars, also more numerous and brighter than elsewhere. Obedient to an instinct common to all domestic animals, the sheep collected for the night around their shepherd. They covered the plain for a great distance towards the east.

At the extreme west of the rock against which the Zephyr had erected his *gourbi*, was a ravine, not very large in that spot, but deepening towards the north and south. At the north it disappeared between slopes covered with cactus, roses, and Barbary fig-trees, whose interlacing branches offered to the reptiles and animals of that region haunts impenetrable to man. At the south the ravine bordered upon a valley, in which was established the *douar* or Arab village, which had furnished our latest aggressors.

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The poor soldier, ignorant of the existence of these redoubtable spots, hearing no sound, seated himself on a rock and began to dream.

It will be impossible to enumerate all the memories which his thoughts evoked, some touching, even poetical, others simply gay or guilty, but all full of charm to him at that hour, and in such circumstances. After a hasty look on his past, a look which embraced his childhood, his wanderings and his success as a mountebank, his escapades, his love affairs, he began to think of the severity of his chiefs, of the council of war—which had sent him to the African Battalion, of his popularity among his comrades, and finally of his present situation.

The result of all this retrospection was a melancholy look addressed to heaven, and these few words: "It doesn't matter, but it would be strange to die on such a beautiful night." With a versatility peculiar to these badly balanced brains, he struck the ground with the butt end of his gun and cried, almost gaily, "Bah! I have my *flingot* (gun) and my cartridges, everything is quiet, and it will be light to-morrow." In order to drive away the ideas that saddened him and weakened his courage, he took his hautboy and prepared to give a little concert.

However, he was mistaken; everything *seemed* quiet, but there is for every man a night without a morrow, that of death, and it seemed to have come for the poor Zephyr, for two enemies, equally formidable, the lion and the Kabyles were advancing silently in the shadow.

The king of the mountain, whom the Arabs call "Said," had just awakened in his den, his eyelids still heavy with the day's sleep; he had had a long yawn, lazily stretched himself, rose and went to the entrance of the cavern to inhale the air, as if to ask on which side he should direct his steps. He was not one of those lions, long-legged and bald like those of Cape Colony, or slight and angular like the American puma, which seems no more formidable than an ordinary domestic mastiff.

He was a real lion of the Atlas, whose imposing and terrible aspect was calculated to weaken the stoutest heart. He moved without haste, his head high, his step free and sure, scenting without hesitation or fear every obstacle on his path, exploring with a tranquil air the shadows cast by the rocks, bounding with grace over the chasms which opened before him.

When he reached the summit of a hill, or one of those escarpments which the moon inundated with her rays, his grand silhouette animated and filled the landscape. On arriving at the entrance of the ravine he stopped, took breath, and, with the same majestic and quiet step, turned towards the Zephyr's encampment.

The rock upon which the soldier was seated did not rise more than fifteen feet above the bottom of the ravine, so that with a single bound the lion could have reached the top. He came steadily on in the shadow thrown by the little eminence, raised his head to measure the height, crouched as if ready to spring—but, instead of doing so, straightened himself again and seemed to listen.

The sheep, not very intelligent, as everyone knows, reassured, as men often are, by numbers, slept quietly, suspecting no more than their guardian the approach of the enemy. The Zephyr at this precise moment was playing the most joyous waltz in his repertoire; he displayed in its execution a sentiment, a sweetness of tone which ought to have charmed the king of the mountain. Perhaps he was not very hungry just then, unless the proverb which says "Hungry stomach has no ears" be false. However that may be, after two or three movements betraying great uncertainty, the terrible beast ended by lying down at the foot of the hillock, supported his great head on his outstretched paws, and, with half-closed lids, seemed to listen—which proves that the story of Orpheus is not a fable.

Now the abandonment of the sheep was known to the neighbouring *douar*. Its inhabitants, supposing that the infidels had left a guard, or a number of soldiers sufficient to defend the flock, decided to await the night to reconnoitre. As all the warriors or men from the "great tents" were away, the old Caid, who commanded the tribe in the absence of the Sheik, thought it best to do this. At the hour when the lion left his den, ten men, the Caid and a young boy, almost a child, son of the Sheik, also left the *douar*, and marched in silence towards the plain, hoping to surprise the Christians and carry off their cattle. Being ignorant of the number of the enemy they were to encounter, the Caid recommended his men to advance with great caution, either that the surprise might be complete, or, in case it seemed best not to attack, that they might retire without raising the infidel's attention.

They approached noiselessly, arms in readiness, finger on the trigger, with the Roumi (the Sheik's son) some steps in advance, for even in the desert *noblesse oblige*. His old kinsman, the Caid, was proud of the child's courage and followed his every movement with a look in which could be read mingled solicitude and admiration.

They were nearing the end of their expedition when the lion, who scented their approach before seeing them, opened his large eyes, knitted his brows and rose. A hyena would have fled like a coward, a panther would have lain in ambush to surprise them later, but the lion advanced proudly to the middle of the ravine. He sniffed at the earth, then with swinging tail, which swept the ground from side to side, with bristling mane and sparkling eyes, majestic and terrible, he paused.

It was at this moment that the Zephyr saw him. The hautboy, from which he lately drew such sweet sounds, slipped from his hand and for half a minute he remained petrified with stupor; but soon recovering his presence of mind and his courage, he seized his gun, cocked it, and took aim. He was just about to fire when a noise, which he could not explain at first, prevented him. Almost at the same instant he heard a voice with an accent of profoundest terror cry "Caid." It was the Roumi, who had just perceived the lion. Seized with the horrible fear which that animal always produces on the Arab, he turned and ran towards his companion. All saw him then; the Caid, forgetting the Christians whom he had come to surprise, commanded "Fire." Ten musket shots rang out in the night, lighting up the ravine, but the lion remained standing. He gave a roar which was echoed like thunder on every side of the mountain, then with one prodigious bound he fell on the Sheik's son.

The lion was holding the Roumi under his heavy paw, his claws were digging into his flesh, whilst with open mouth, panting breath, his eyes blazing with ferocity, he seemed ready to devour him. It was at this moment that Carette fired. The noble beast, struck in the temple, gave a second roar, but it was only a death rattle this time, and he fell to rise no more. Meanwhile, not knowing that he was dead, the soldier jumped into the ravine and advanced bravely to the ferocious beast, whilst the Arabs, in spite of their incontestable courage, rested on the defensive, not daring to approach to dispatch the lion, or to raise their young comrade. It was the Zephyr that lifted him and placed him upon a rock. I have said that Carette had travelled with a charlatan and pretended to certain medical knowledge.

If his pretensions were not fully justified they were in a measure, his master taking about with him a skeleton and some anatomical plates, which he exhibited to the public. His pupil had often examined them; and he had, in addition, a lightness of touch, a dexterity acquired in prestidigitation during another phase of his adventurous youth. This explains how he staunched the blood, bandaged the wounds, and tended the Roumi with a skill which gave the Arabs an exalted idea of his talents.

When his nephew came to himself the Caid, who until then had not spoken, went up to Carette and thanked him, without much effusion, but in the grave tones peculiar to the men of the mountains, which, if it is less expressive, is always more sincere than the loquacity of the Greeks. The Zephyr, who spoke a little Arabic, like most soldiers who have passed some time in Africa, expressed to the Caid his desire to live on good terms with them in so earnest a tone that his new friends could not doubt his sincerity. From that day he was, so to speak, adopted by the tribe of Beni-Hammers, and

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almost lived with them. The sheep were guarded by the men belonging to the *douar*, to which the Zephyr had rendered a service. During this time Carette tended the sick, played on the hautboy, ate hot dishes, swallowed yatagans, and juggled for everybody.

As he did not kill many more patients than our qualified doctors, and as his hautboy and his sleight-of-hand tricks had still more success with the Beni-Hammers than with the Zephyrs, his popularity became so great with these simple people that they often wondered what was to become of them when the stranger went away. In order not to grieve my readers, I will not speak of the young girls; I will merely say that the waters of the spring, from which they filled their pitchers, preserved for a long time a peculiar taste on account of the tears they shed when speaking of the departure of the "Joyful."

The man seemed determined to enter.

Four months later we returned to the plain where we had abandoned the sheep. The expedition had been gone longer than we at first supposed, but it ended happily. Kabylia was subdued; the Douars had surrendered; the tribute had been discharged, and the Kabyles, who had received us with musket shots at the beginning of the campaign, returned to our ranks, deserting as they neared their own villages.

When the advance guard emerged from the mountains on to the plain and saw it covered with sheep, browsing quietly, a great cry arose, and the news spread with the rapidity of a telegram from head to foot of the column. "Carette and the sheep! The sheep and the Zephyr! Impossible! But, look, there they are!" These phrases, and others like them, were repeated from left to right of our little army, and reached the General, who, not finding it credible, put his horse to a gallop, in order to confirm such a miracle with his own eyes. The Zephyrs, more interested than anybody in the matter, as it was to them an affair of honour, raised a "hurrah," and broke into a run. At last we were compelled to yield to ocular evidence.

The sheep were there, and Carette, leaning on his gun, smiling, but with something grave in his eyes, waited our arrival with dignity.

Then the drums beat, the bands played their gayest, and for an hour the brave Zephyr was the object of a veritable ovation.

Here, perhaps, I ought to end this episode, of which I can attest the truth, being an eye-witness, but I am a conscientious writer, and believe I shall satisfy my readers more by telling them what eventually became of Carette. If he had not belonged to the African Battalion it is probable that he would have been decorated, but his artistic antecedents forbade his having that distinction. At least, so thought the General, who gave him, instead, a hundred francs. On their side, the Beni-Hammers had prepared the lion's skin, as they know how to do it in the desert, and when we entered Constantine, Carette found himself rich. He sold the skin for three hundred francs. As soon as he was in possession of that sum he took a "stretch" (illegal absence) of three days with two comrades. This escapade cost him what the regiment calls "eleven and four"—that is, eleven days in prison and four in the black hole.

"Sic transit gloria mundi."

I met him precisely at the moment when they were taking him to the "carcere duro," and the interest I felt in him prompted me to remonstrate with him on the past. "Bah!" he replied; "if, instead of giving me a hundred francs, the General had given me a handshake, it might perhaps have made me reflect; but no, he gave me the money. What could I do with it? Buy a house?" He shrugged his shoulders.

"It was to have a spree with, wasn't it? That's what I did, and now they lock me up! Ah, well, it is not just! Because, you see, the General never would have got clear, as I did, with five thousand sheep on his hands, and a lion, and all the Bedouins—men and women. I would like to have seen him in my place!" He gave another shrug, showing his disdain for the General, after which he went off with the corporal to remain under lock and key for fifteen days.

. . . . . .

Ten years later I had left the army, and settled in the country.

One day, hearing a lively altercation outside the grating, I opened the window to find out the cause. It was my servant, opposing, most energetically, the entrance of a man, an ass, a woman, and a little girl. The man seemed determined to enter, in spite of all remonstrances. I recognised him at once by his sly air, his blue eyes and curly hair. It was Carette!

I confess that I was rather pleased to see him again, not only for himself, but for all the memories evoked by his presence.

I called to the servant to let him in, and ran out to meet him.

The ass and the indescribable baggage which he carried, were put in the stable, and I made Carette and his family come into the dining-room. Then he told me that he was married, and that he travelled in turn as musician, dentist, and prestidigitator; that, thanks to his triple industry, he lived well, and was content with his lot.

"But all the same," he added, with a sigh of regret, "I have never had, and never shall have, such a good time as during the four months I spent with the Beni-Hammers."

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MR. MITTGAR.

BELL was speaking.

"Oh, please, dear Mr. Mittgar, do sing! Sing that favourite of yours; what is it? 'When other lips'; yes, that's it. Oh, do please."

She stood before his chair, playfully clasping her hands in supplication, with a mischievous twinkle in her seventeen-year old brown eyes. A sad smile lit up his thin yellow face when she stopped, and he rose to his full six foot of skin and bone, and strode over to the music case to hunt up Bell's favourite song, while she, convulsed with laughter in anticipation of the sport to come, retreated amongst her friends and pressed her handkerchief over her mouth.

It was always great fun to ask Mr. Mittgar down for the evening and to get in some friends to hear him sing. Framed in his broken English, the most solemn songs became to the audience more humorous by a long way than the most humorous song written.

No one knew much about him, except that he had been

"Oh, please, dear Mr. Mittgar, do sing!"

introduced at some bye-gone period by a friend of Bell's father. The family did not worry their heads about his pedigree. He had come over from Switzerland, and was something in the city of London; what, it didn't much matter to anyone.

Beyond his powers of singing he had no personal attractions, if the inharmonious notes that escaped his lips in illogical sequence may be called an attraction. In any case, it proved the key to many a fashionable drawing-room, where the funny young man palled on the company, and his humorous songs fell flat.

Of all those listeners who had split their sides with laughter behind his back, none were so boldly and daringly hypocritical as Bell Davies. She egged him on to sing, she fawned over him, and complimented him on his unparalleled abilities, all of which he honestly believed to be genuine, not for a single moment doubting the sincerity of her praises; and then she laughed behind his back.

He was a tall, lean man of thirty or thereabouts. A thin beard grew from a chin that had never felt the razor, and a pair of large, sentimental eyes were set one on either side of a rather large and delicate-looking nose.

In his own way, he was a braggart. He would entertain a dinner table for an hour at a time with anecdotes of his travels abroad, and the coolness and presence of mind which he had invariably exhibited. In fact, it seemed as if no anecdote were complete without some reference to his physical bravery.

But, for all that, he was an honest, good fellow, "horridly polite" to Bell and to all ladies, as is the custom of male continentalers, and with a large opinion of his own vocal powers. He loved to be applauded; his big eyes would glisten and his thin face flush with pride when the guests clapped and cheered in pure derision and mock admiration at the result of his efforts.

And so on this particular evening, when he had wailed the last long-drawn note of his favourite song, he turned with a low bow to the enthusiastic audience, and strutted with a degree of pride to his seat.

"Oh, that was perfectly delicious!" half-screamed Bell, struggling to keep back the laughter which nearly choked her. "Thank you so much. We——." Then the bursting frivolity found vent in a peal of laughter, which she cut short with an effort, by asking her right-hand neighbour to "tell Mr. Mittgar that awfully good joke. He would like it so."

"I do luff to zing zat zong: 'Ven oder leeps.' Weminds me of mine Sweetzerland, mine land. It is a song beautiful, and ze vords are magnifique."

At such times he would relapse into quietude for a few moments, and the room, with its merry-faced guests, would be oblivious to him, as his thoughts wandered back to the tiny *châtel* on the sloping sides of the snow-capped Alps, where in his memory still dwelt a dainty little maiden, whose lips he had felt against his own long years ago when he had set out for London to build his fortune.

The din of the chatter would give place to the gentle tinkle of the sheep bells far up the mountain side, the boisterous shouts of the vivacious Bell and her companions would be drowned in the quiet laughter of little Gretchen as she played with him as a boy. Then the news came to him of the death of his parents, to whose funeral he was unable to go, for the fortune was still in the air, instead of in his pocket. And not long after he wrote to give the honest reason, he heard that Gretchen was gone, and had married a watchmaker's assistant in Geneva.

This blow drove all ambition from his soul. He was a simple-minded man, very simple-minded, and he had loved once, and would never love again. Gretchen had deceived him; that was enough.

He was roused from his reverie by the restless Bell, who stood before him, with one arm round a girl-friend's waist, and the other holding a dish of oranges. At first he shook his head and said that he did not want any, but she pressed him, and, rather than in any way give her the slightest cause for offence, he took one—one that she pointed out as being ripe and sweet.

His discovery that it was an imitation one of soft dough, that stuck to his fingers and messed his dress coat, was the signal for a further burst of merriment, in which he joined, half-heartedly, but wretchedly miserable at heart in the knowledge that this, his only evening suit, was spoiled.

He was not rich. But appearances had to be kept up, for without them there would be no dinners and no parties, and without these he could have no opportunity of displaying his vocal ability, which was the one delight of his weary existence.

A week or two later he was at the house again, on the occasion of Bell's eighteenth birthday, and by her special request he sang "Ven oder leeps" twice during the evening. Had she enjoyed a keener perception, had she given a moment's thought to his appearance and his manner, she would have perceived that the thin cheeks were a trifle more sunken, and the quavering, unmelodious voice a trifle weaker than it had been when she last had listened to that song.

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And had she given him further attention, she would have noticed that his walk was not so brave nor so steady as it had been on previous occasions, and that he rested one hand on the frame of the piano while he lifted up his voice, and that he seemed glad to get to his seat when it was over.

Then, again, at dinner he was less loquacious, and spoke less frequently of his exploits, while he ate almost ravenously, and was more often than not sitting with half-closed eyes, thinking.

But Bell was neither perceptive nor thoughtful, and so she teased him ruthlessly, as she had always done, and hypocritically praised his singing. It was the happiest moment of the whole evening for him when she drew her handkerchief away from her full red lips, and told him that she thought, if anything, his voice was improving. He believed her. He had no cause to doubt her sincerity.

January came on apace, and one bitterly cold afternoon Bell and her mother were driving home from Piccadilly through the gathering gloom of the lamp-lighted streets. They were passing along a side thoroughfare out of Oxford Street.

"Listen, mater; that's funny, isn't it?"

The mother bent her head. From the middle of the road some distance ahead, and drawing nearer, came the wail:

"Ven oder leeps an' oder hearts ——"

"Why, that's—that's——" She raised her hands in horror.

"Good gracious," Bell answered, looking inquiringly at her mother's perplexed face. "It can't be Mr. Mittgar. It *can't.*"

She let down the window and peered out into the road. In the long lean figure, with the rusty black frock-coat buttoned up round his throat, and the straggling beard and gaunt face, she recognised Mr. Mittgar, and sank back in her seat horror-struck.

"To think that he should have the audacity——!" she gasped.

"*Who*, love? Is it he? Is it really that—that scoundrel, Mr. Mittgar, singing in the streets; and to think that he should partake of our hospitality while participating in this vulgar occupation. The—the villain."

Business had gone from bad to worse. There was nothing for it but to try to make a few honest pence with his voice. It was so good, so full, so pure. He knew that. Miss Bell had often told him. She had often said that he would take the world by storm some day. And yet, the people did not seem to appreciate it much. Perhaps it was too cold for them to open their doors and windows and to throw out coppers as evidence of their recognition of genuine merit.

He might have pawned his dress suit and his white shirt and socks and boots, as he had done the rest of his wardrobe; but in that case he would have been denied the privilege of singing in the drawing-rooms of his friends' houses, where he loved to pose as the lion of the evening.

He was too proud to make known his financial distress to Bell's father or any of his friends. For many a long week he had almost starved, and still he kept his clothes and sang to please Bell. There seemed now no signs of work ever being obtainable; besides, there was no dishonour in showing the British public what real meritorious singing was, even though the concert platform was the kerbstone.

Next day he received a curt letter from Mrs. Davies: he was prohibited to place his foot inside their door again. He did not know the reason—he could only guess; and he was sure that whatever this woman thought, or whatever her husband thought, it was no fault of their daughter's that he was refused admittance to the house. She had always held him in high esteem, and appreciated the natural gift which a good and kind Providence had bestowed upon him.

The receipt of this letter was his death-warrant. No more would his voice resound through the sweet-scented drawing-room, crowded with eager and appreciative faces; no more would he bow his thanks, too overcome with emotion to give expression in words; no more would Miss Bell coax him to sing that dear old song.

It was a hard, bitter world. Unconsciously his thoughts reverted to the old days on the Alps with Gretchen, and, for an hour after he first read that note, he sat with his shaggy head resting on his emaciated arms, lost to the world, and back again in the old home.

When he raised his head, he dropped it again heavily. There was no strength in his body, and his brow got hot and cold rapidly by turns. He staggered to the truckle bed and threw himself on it. He felt that unless matters altered very, very considerably in his favour shortly, he would have to curl up and die.

There was the dress suit. It was of no use now. It would never be worn again by him at all events, and there seemed no reason why he should not pawn it. But, what if he did? What would be the result? It would bring him the wherewithal to exist a few days longer, and then there would be an end of it; he would be in the same position exactly as he was to-day. No, he would keep that intact.

Towards the luncheon hour next noon, Bell Davies received a dirty note from the butler, into whose hands it had been put by a woman at the door.

"Pardon my intrusion, Miss Bell," it ran, in a shaky, small foreign hand, "I am sick very, and it is you who I would care to see if it would please you to come for a short moment. Only for a short moment. Yours humble, Leon Mittgar."

"What is it, child?" demanded Mrs Davies, adjusting her pince-nez.

He staggered to the truckle bed.

"Nothing; nothing, mater." She was sorely tempted to answer this request. Mrs. Davies took it out of her hand and read it with difficulty; then, turning to the man, she commanded him to send the woman away at once, with no reply.

"Insolence! Low vulgar wretch!"

Her dignity was hurt for the time. Bell felt sorry for the poor man for a few moments, and then forgot his existence.

"There ain't no answer; 'ee tried ter shove me down the bloomin' doorstep, the flunkey did, darn 'im." The dignity of Mrs. Groggins, his landlady, too, was hurt, and folding her arms she contemplated the dying man serenely. "She hated corpses in her house; it wasn't in no wise likely to make her respectable house popular."

When she left the room Mittgar tossed about on his bed. She would come, ah, yes! she would come, would Miss Bell, so good, so appreciative. She had always been his champion when he used to visit the house, and she would never forsake him now, nor refuse to grant this very modest request of his. Modest? Was it modest, after all? Had the note been offensive to her? He grew troubled in spirit at the thought,

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and it worried him sadly, so that although he wanted to sleep, he could not.

What recompense could he make to Miss Bell, if this note had really offended her finer feelings? It was audacious, perhaps, to request her to come and see him as he was, but he had not stopped to think; he would like to have seen her once more.

Then a sudden thought entered that burning brain, and, struggling bravely to his feet, he staggered over to his little table, and sank on the chair in front of it. He must send her some reward for her kindness, some token of his last moments to her, so kind, so sensible. The little ivory *châlet* that Gretchen had given him had gone, the tiny model of the church at Geneva had gone, the many little treasures that he had stored up for years and years in remembrance of his happier days in that home away over on those lovely Swiss mountains—all had gone, gone for ever.

Next day, Miss Bell Davies received a roll by book post. She opened it. It was a well-fingered and rough-edged copy of "When other lips." On the top right-hand corner were inscribed the words:

"To Miss Bell Davies, from one she loved to hear sing this song,—LEON MITTGAR."

And the landlady declared, when she came in with the doctor in the morning and found him cold beside the dress-suit laid out on the bed, that her slumber had been interrupted during the night by erratic and untuneful singing from that room.

HER REVENGE.

MISERABLE wet day. Time, the year of grace 1783. Scene, an old château in Brittany. The young Vicomte de la Sainte Cour was horribly bored. All the morning through he had lounged in the dim old library, some of whose dusty volumes had not been stirred from their places for nigh a whole generation, and certainly contained no matter sufficiently interesting to the mind of the gay young Parisian noble, fresh from the festivities of the Court of Marie Antoinette and the make-believe rusticity of Le Petit Trianon.

Poor Raoul! he felt himself much to be pitied in this, his self-imposed exile at his aunt's château; but circumstances over which he had no control—*i.e.*, certain pressing and too-clamorous creditors—had necessitated a hasty, not to say somewhat undignified, retreat to the Château de Saint Jean in the heart of Brittany, where he hoped to secure his aunt's assistance in repairing his shattered fortunes.

That she was deeply shocked and offended he knew, but he also knew that the childless old lady dearly loved his handsome scapegrace self, womanlike, perhaps never more so than when she had most cause for anger.

He had arrived at the château the previous evening, and his reception had been anything but cordial, and all this morning he had awaited an audience with his much-offended relative, who had at last sent him word that she desired his presence at dinner at four o'clock.

"Thank Heaven it is almost four!" ejaculated Raoul, as, wearied and bored beyond expression, he wended his way to the apartments of the Marquise, from which she rarely, if ever, stirred.

He reached the ante-chamber of the salon, and glanced at the Dresden clock on a gilt console. Bah! It wanted ten minutes to the hour, and Raoul knew the old lady's rigid notions of etiquette, and felt sure that the sin of arriving too soon for dinner was as great, in her eyes, as that of arriving too late.

Well, there was nothing for it but to wait the prescribed ten minutes and enter the apartment exactly on the stroke of four; so, for the one hundred and twentieth time that day, the Vicomte gazed listlessly out on to the great court of the château, wet and streaming in the never-ceasing rain.

A patter of high-heeled shoes, a rustle of silken skirts, and Raoul turns from his contemplation of the dreary courtyard to encounter surely the daintiest little waiting-maid that ever carried a dish. Her lace cap is perched coquettishly on her soft brown hair, her robe of pink silk is caught back over a petticoat of palest green, short enough to reveal her feet and ankles and her clocked stockings and crimson high-heeled shoes. Her bodice, cut low, after the fashion of the day, displays a neck that, for roundness and whiteness, a Court lady might envy, while, in her hand, she carries a tureen of soup.

But her face! Raoul forgot all else after one glance at it—like a rose in its flower-like tints, and lighted up with a pair of hazel eyes, which, in passing, flash swiftly for a moment at the handsome young Vicomte, of whom all the household is talking.

Raoul is seized with a sudden mad impulse. Quick as thought he springs from the window and places himself before the door of the salon in such a manner as to effectually bar all further progress of the pretty maid.

She stands irresolute; then, glancing timidly at the handsome, mocking face before her, exclaims:

"Will you permit me to pass, monsieur?"

"Not yet, ma belle; it is not often such a vision of loveliness gladdens my eyes. You must stay a moment and talk to me. Tell me how it happens that I, who have been shut up here nigh two days, have never discovered you before."

An angry flush crimsons the girl's fair face, to be succeeded by a sudden gleam of mischief in her eyes, as, repressing the sharp words that rise to her lips, she says again:

"Will you permit me to pass, monsieur? Madame la Marquise is waiting for me."

But he does not quit his position in front of the door, although the little feet begin to drum impatiently, and already the clock is on the stroke of four.

"Madame does not like to be kept waiting," she begins, when Raoul interrupts her.

"Let madame wait," he says; then, seeing a look of genuine distress on the lovely face, he continues, "Come, my fair prisoner, on one condition will I let you pass. Let me but kiss those tempting lips—let me——."

She draws herself up with a stateliness of a duchess.

"Monsieur, you mistake," she begins haughtily; but Raoul's quick ears catch the sound of approaching footsteps.

She can offer no resistance, embarrassed as she is with the tureen, and, before she quite realises the act, the audacious young noble has claimed his toll, and actually kisses her, then, throwing open the door, stands aside, bowing to her deeply as he would to his aunt herself.

One flash of the hazel eyes, and he hears her mutter beneath her breath, "Some day, my fine Vicomte, I will make you pay for this"; and the pretty waiting-maid passed into the Marquise's presence, followed closely by the scapegrace Raoul

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Needless to say, he wins the old lady's full forgiveness before he has been five minutes at dinner; only once he makes an unlucky remark which almost imperils his hopes.

"Madame, you have a little maid here whose face would have been a model for an artist. Who is she?"

The old lady scrutinises him keenly with dark eyes which age has not robbed of their fire.

"Raoul, remember, if I find you meddling with my maids, pretty or otherwise, you may expect no further grace from me."

Raoul maintains a discreet silence and merely bows in answer to the Marquise's warning, but he mentally ejaculates —"Gad, I hope the little minx will tell no tales."

Evidently "the little minx" did not, for two days later the Vicomte starts again for Paris with ample means to satisfy his creditors and continue his gay life at Court, and, if at first a flower-like face and a pair of flashing hazel eyes haunt his dreams, other fair faces claim his thoughts, and as time goes on, the pretty serving-maid at the old château becomes only a dim memory.

Ten years after. Gone is the gay Court, gone the beautiful queen who presided over its revels, gone all that was bright and gracious; and in its stead reigns a red-capped tyranny, whose motto, indeed, is "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," but whose argument is chiefly guillotine.

Citizen Danton sits in his room busily writing.

A tall, well-made man, with brown hair, unpowdered and brushed carelessly off his forehead, and a lion-like head, he is a refreshing contrast to the dandy, yellow-faced Robespierre and the brutal Marat, his colleagues.

A member of the National Guard enters the room; Danton looks up sharply.

"What is it, citizen?"

"The citizeness Valerie wishes to see you."

"Let the citizeness enter," he says gruffly enough, but bends his head quickly over his writing, that the man may not see the rare pleasure her coming gives him.

A moment after the citizeness enters, and from the cordiality of their greeting it is easy to see that they are old friends.

"To what lucky accident may I ascribe the visit of the adorable citizeness?" he says, in the florid language so much in vogue.

"The adorable citizeness," a lovely woman of seven-and-twenty, who well merits the title of "adorable," shrugs her shoulders and laughs.

"Still as complimentary as ever, citizen. Well, I will not waste your time in unnecessary guessing. I have come to beg a favour."

"Which is granted already, lovely one."

"Take care, citizen—I shall keep you to your word." Then, the careless gaiety disappearing from her mobile features, "You have on your list of 'suspects' the name of one Raoul, sometime Vicomte de la Sainte Cour. You must give him to me."

This latter with a pretty air of command.

Danton's face grows grave. He takes up the list. Yes, there was the name included in to-morrow's list for the guillotine. He glances keenly at the fair petitioner. She catches the glance and understands it perfectly.

"Have no fear, citizen. It is but to repay a long-cherished vengeance of which his death will deprive me, that I beg his life." Danton takes up his pen irresolutely, and Citizeness Valerie's eyes gleam with a quick flash of triumph—she has won. "What would you have me do, citizeness?" "Strike his name from the list and send an order for his release, together with a private note telling at whose intercession he has been released. He will, without doubt, come to thank me to-morrow; and then—ah! then we shall see," and her brilliant hazel eyes flash with an ominous light that bodes ill for the unlucky Vicomte.

Danton smiles grimly as he writes the order and draws the pen through Raoul's name on the list.

"Citizeness, excuse a somewhat worn simile; but you women are uncommonly like cats, and treat us poor men very much as that interesting feline animal treats a mouse. To a man the idea that one's enemy was about to be executed would be ample revenge; but, no, you must have the unfortunate wretch in your power, to tease and worry, to alternately torment and coax until your sense of wrong is satisfied. Excuse the dissertation," he added, handing her the order; "nevertheless, you must acknowledge its truth."

An odd smile curls the lips of the beautiful woman as she rises to make her adieu.

"Citizen, I cannot thank you sufficiently; only know that this morning you have placed in my hands a revenge for which I have waited ten long years. Whether you will admire the manner in which I pursue it is another question; but of this rest assured—of all the many favours you have bestowed on me during the years you have known me, you have conferred no greater than this boon."

A smile, a rustle of silk, and the next moment she is gone, leaving behind her a subtle perfume of roses, which seem strangely out of place in an arch-republican's room, and, glancing down, Danton sees lying on the floor a little lace handkerchief.

He takes it carefully in his great hands—how small and dainty it seems to him—smooths it carefully out, then, looking round, as if he expects to see her return and claim it, he places it with tender care in an inner pocket in the breast of his coat. And, for a moment on his rugged face there shines that wondrous light that "never was on land or sea," for dearer even than she guesses is the Citizeness Valerie to this great man, who holds in his hands the fate of France.

Who is the Citizeness Valerie? The Citizeness Valerie is a beautiful actress, whom all Paris raves about, and whose beauty and sparkling wit draw crowds to the theatre, in spite of the grim terror reigning supreme. No one knows anything about her; no one has ever heard of her until, two years ago, she had risen suddenly on the dramatic horizon, a star of the first magnitude.

The wildest stories are told of her. Some say she is a young aristocrat who has lost all her kindred by the guillotine; others, that she is a true daughter of the people, and has been seen with the women who have sacked Versailles. Be it as it may, however, aristocrat and democrat alike agree in worshipping at her shrine, and over all her power seems illimitable.

Danton, perhaps, can tell more about her than most people; but Danton, when questioned on the subject, is undeniably grim, and Danton, when grim, is a lion to be approached with utmost delicacy and care.

On this very day, when, according to his forecast of events yesterday, Raoul, *ci-devant* Vicomte de la Saint Cour, should have yielded up his head to the Republic, he is a free man—free to go whither he will. He can hardly credit his good fortune. And where, indeed, should he go but to the woman who, for some unknown reason, is sufficiently interested in him to preserve his head, for the present, on his shoulders.

He has aged considerably since, ten years ago, he sought refuge in the old Château de Saint Jean. Is it only ten? To Raoul it seems nigh a hundred. Somehow, as he walks slowly in the direction of the Citizeness Valerie's house, his thoughts dwell on that visit of ten years ago.

Poor old Marquise!—luckily for her, she died before all these troubles fell so thick upon "La Belle France," and left all her wealth—which was not inconsiderable—to her much-beloved nephew Raoul.

Not much of that wealth remains, he thinks grimly, save the old château in Brittany, which has escaped the general destruction of the châteaux, owing to the pious memory in which the late Marquise de Brillac is still held, high and low, for miles round.

But her nephew dare not claim his own, and he is on his way to thank this woman who has thought fit to save his worthless life. That done, he will raise what money he can by the sale of a few jewels that yet remain to him; then he will take ship to England, there to await the dawning of better times.

His reflections have brought him to the house of the Citizeness Valerie, where he is evidently expected, for no sooner has he given his name than a groom of the chambers, in rich livery, comes forward to conduct him to the salon, where the citizeness will receive him.

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Raoul gazes curiously on the unmistakable signs of wealth that meet his eye. The costly furniture, the pictures, the rich liveries of the servants; verily, he thinks this actress lives as well as, ten years ago, did a princess of the royal blood.

The servant conducts him to a spacious apartment, furnished with all the extravagance of the period, and informs him that the citizeness will receive him without delay.

Left alone, unconsciously Raoul's thoughts fall back into the train in which they ran during his walk hither. Once more he goes back to that dreary afternoon ten years ago, and before him rises, as many a time it has risen, a lovely flower-like face, and angry, flashing hazel eyes. He puts the vision from him with a bitter laugh. Surely his troubles have turned his brain, that the face of a pretty waiting-maid should haunt him so. Then comes the uneasy doubt that has often perplexed him before. What if, after all, she was no serving-maid, but one of his own rank? Bah! it all happened ten years ago, and a kiss is no such crime after all.

The door opens and he goes forward to meet the citizeness, who enters. Clad in a pale pink gown of some soft, clinging material, she looks her loveliest to-day; but Raoul starts back, for surely those hazel eyes and that soft brown hair are the same which have so often haunted his dreams. The roundness of the girlish face, and the slenderness of the girlish figure are gone; but, save that her beauty has blossomed into a glorious maturity, there stands before him the little maid of the château.

She sees his start, and smiles.

"I fear I have disturbed your meditations, monsieur."

She drops the Republican "citizen" in speaking to this aristocrat.

Heavens, the very voice! Raoul, bewildered beyond expression involuntarily draws his hand across his eyes as though to convince himself of his wakefulness. Then his ever ready wit comes to his assistance.

"I have been so long exiled in La Vendée that the glory of the goddess of Paris somewhat dazzles me," he says, bowing low over the white hand she holds out to him.

She flushes, but whether in pleasure or anger he cannot tell.

"Madame, let me convey to you my sincerest thanks for having deigned to intercede for my worthless life," continues Raoul, half unconscious, but holding the little white hand in his own, browned and hardened by sun and exposure.

She draws it away quickly, and her face pales and crimsons again with some sudden emotion.

"The poor actress, Valerie, should deem herself too highly honoured if she be in any way instrumental in saving the life of a Sainte Cour," she begins bitterly, then stops suddenly, as she meets the eyes of the Vicomte fixed reproachfully on her.

"Nay, madame, do not undervalue your own gift; what you have done for me to-day has rendered me your slave for ever."

A gleam of the old merriment flashes in Valerie's eyes; quick as thought she decides how to act.

"No more thanks, monsieur; I take you at your word, and enrol you as 'my slave for ever.' Is it not so?"

"No fair mistress owned a more willing slave," he responds eagerly, for this woman has set his heart beating and his pulse dancing as no one has done before, not even in the old far-away days of Versailles.

"One boon, only, I crave," he continues; "that is, the name of the fair lady I serve?"

For an instant a shade passes over the face of the actress; but only for an instant. With a gay laugh she says:

"I am the Citizeness Valerie to all now; once, long ago, I was——." Then, noting his eager anxiety, she interrupts herself and cries gaily, "Come, monsieur, I want your help in a little comedy I am rehearsing; perhaps, after that is given, I will tell you who I was once," and she adds, in a lower tone, as if addressing herself, "if you will not already have remembered it."

"I am your slave in everything," says Raoul, thinking what a mercurial woman this actress is—so rapid, and, withal, so charming, are her transitions from grave to gay.

She laughs an odd little laugh, which has a ring of mockery in its tones.

"The scene of the comedy is laid in an old château. The time, ten years ago. The *dramatis personæ*—well, for convenience sake, we will say you and I."

Raoul feels his heart beat with a strange sense of expectancy.

"You will have no need to change your character," she goes on. "You are a young noble on a short visit to the château, and bored to death with dulness. I—well, I am a waiting-maid—or, perhaps I should say, a young friend of the old marquise (did I tell you the chateau belonged to an old marquise?), who, out of sheer ennui, masqueraded as her waiting-maid. Her name—let us say her name is Valerie le Clère—though, perhaps, the name makes no great difference. Let us suppose this corner of the room to be the ante-chamber to madame's salon. Enter the young noble."

She speaks quickly, trembling with excitement, and Raoul catches the fever of her words, for back from the dim memories of long ago comes this odd comedy, the first act of which was played out ten years ago.

"Yes," he says, "I know this scene—enter myself, and shortly afterward, enter the so-called waiting-maid, with a tureen in her hand—so, madame," catching up a piece of porcelain from a neighbouring table and placing it in Valerie's hands.

Then, throwing himself before the door with all his old easy grace, he looks at her with the fire of a fierce, new-awakened love burning in his eyes.

Slowly a ripple of laughter breaks from her as she raises her hazel eyes to his brown ones.

"Well, monsieur, as you know this comedy so well, what then?"

What does Raoul see in those changeful depths, that, heedless of the delicate porcelain she holds, he springs forward and catches her in his arms, forgetful of all that has passed in these ten years, kissing her, not once, but again and again?

Valerie does not seem displeased at such a proceeding, nor does she seek to free herself from the prison of his strong embrace; only, a few minutes afterwards, she says:

"Ah! M. le Vicomte la Sainte Cour, ten years ago I told you I would be revenged. I've made your noble self fall in love with the actress, the Citizeness Valerie. I have given you 'tit for tat.'"

For answer, he holds the slender figure closer in his arms, and gazes with untold love at the lovely, laughing face upturned to his.

"You have made me fall in love with the noblest woman this earth possesses—a woman who knows the highest manner of revenging herself," he says passionately; and Valerie is silent, for at last her vengeance is complete.

In the gallery of the old Château de Sainte Jean hangs the portrait of Valerie, Vicomtess de la Sainte Cour, and beneath it, on a velvet bracket, is a quaint china tureen, in white and gold porcelain. Strangers often wonder what connection there is between the porcelain and the picture, but their curiosity is seldom, if ever, rewarded. The portrait was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, one of the latest and best, during the stay of the Vicomte and his wife in England, which lasted from 1793 until after the Restoration in 1815.

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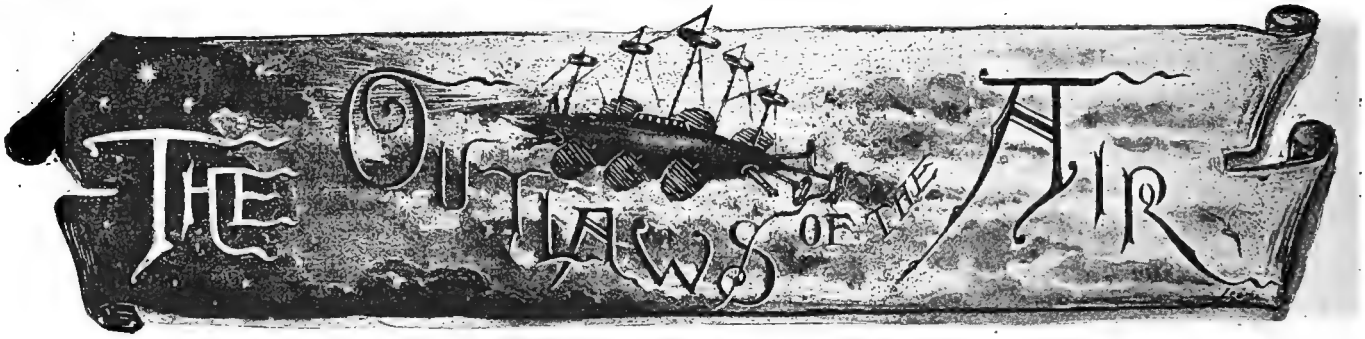


By George Griffith,

Author of "The Angel of the Revolution," "The Syren of the Skies," &c.

SUMMARY.

Max Renault, the leading spirit of the Anarchist "Autonomie Group No. 7," meets his colleagues in a club near the Caledonian Road on the eve of President Carnot's assassination. He shoots a traitor who has almost betrayed the Group and so saved Carnot's life. Then he tells them that he is about to emigrate with a society of Socialists, one of whom, Frederick Austen, a wealthy engineer who has been converted to Socialism, takes out with him a working model of an aerial vessel. This air-ship Renault determines to steal when complete, and use for the purpose of bringing about an Anarchist reign of terror. Meanwhile, Franz Hartog is to steal a very fast torpedo-boat destroyer, which is to be built at Elbing for the Russian Government, and, with her, to levy blackmail on the Atlantic, and so raise funds to build an Anarchist aerial fleet.

On Christmas Day, 1898, the *Calypso*, a steam yacht belonging to Sir Harry Milton, sights an island in the South Pacific, from which an electric launch, the *Mermaid*, puts off and tows the yacht in. Frank Markham, in command of the launch, tells Sir Harry, with whom are travelling his sister, Violet, and Herbert Wyndham, a lieutenant in the British Navy, on sick leave, that the island is Utopia, a Socialist colony, founded some three years before by emigrants from England. On the island Sir Harry finds Frederick Austen, an old friend of his father's, who introduces the visitors to Edward Adams and Max Renault and the rest of the Utopians, and after lunch tells them the story of Utopia. Later on, Lieutenant Wyndham describes the outrages committed by the vessel Hartog has stolen from Elbing,—on the Atlantic, and Mr. Austen vows that if no one else can sink the *Destroyer* the Utopians will. Wyndham inspects the *Nautilus*, which he finds to be a novel but most formidable craft, and on board of which he offers to serve for the purpose of hunting down the pirate *Destroyer*. The offer is accepted, and late that night, when the Lieutenant and Sir Harry are taking a stroll upon the hills, they are astounded by the apparition of an air-ship soaring across the mountains in the interior of the island.

CHAPTER VII.

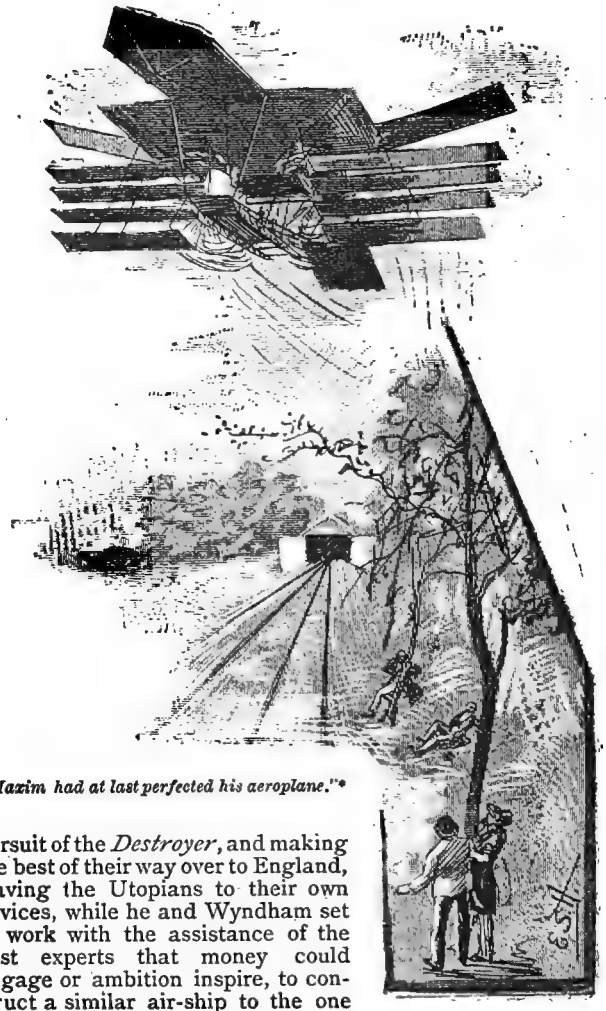
A Very Serious Matter.

As may well be imagined, there was very little sleep that night for either Sir Harry or the Lieutenant. All the way home they discussed the startling and terrible discovery which, as it were, had been forced upon them during their stroll.

Sir Harry looked upon it chiefly in its more romantic and marvellous aspect. To him the mysterious craft that they had seen flying so swiftly and so gracefully through the gloom of the midnight was a triumph of art and science which commanded his wonder and admiration, rather than excited his apprehension; but to Wyndham's disciplined and practical mind the fact that the Utopians possessed a navigable air-ship assumed both darker and larger proportions than it did in the eyes of his civilian friend.

They were abroad again before sunrise, after two or three hours of vain attempt to sleep. Violet and her maid, who was terribly scandalised at the picturesquely airy costumes of the Utopian girls, were sleeping down in the settlement as Dora Merton's guests, and so the two friends had still an hour or so in which to once more discuss their discovery before they were obliged to finally make up their minds as to what course they were to pursue.

Sir Harry was rather inclined to get the *Calypso* repaired as quickly as possible, find an excuse for not joining in the



"*Maxim had at last perfected his aeroplane.*"*

pursuit of the *Destroyer*, and making the best of their way over to England, leaving the Utopians to their own devices, while he and Wyndham set to work with the assistance of the best experts that money could engage or ambition inspire, to construct a similar air-ship to the one that they had seen speeding over the hills of Utopia.

"What these people have done we can do," he said, when he had explained his project to Wyndham. "We have more money, and we surely ought to be able to command higher skill. Added to that, we shall start with the knowledge that the thing is really possible, since we have actually seen the

* The above illustration is drawn from a photograph given by Mr. Maxim to the Author, who believes it to be the only absolutely correct picture published of the fameus aeroplane as it will appear in full flight.

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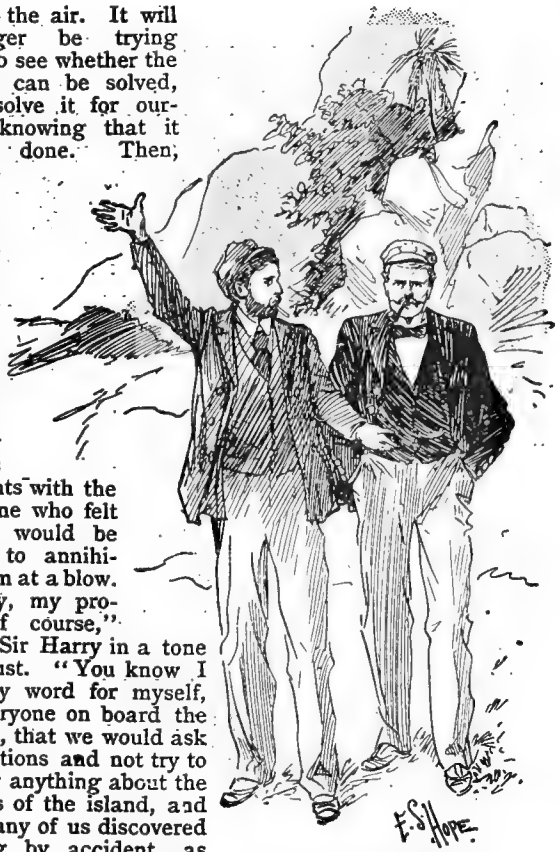
vessel in the air. It will no longer be trying simply to see whether the problem can be solved, but to solve it for ourselves, knowing that it can be done. Then, again—oh, confound it, I forgot that!"

"Forgot what?" asked Wyndham, who had been listening to his arguments with the air of one who felt that he would be obliged to annihilate them at a blow.



"Where would the fleet be?"

"Why, my promise, of course," replied Sir Harry in a tone of disgust. "You know I gave my word for myself, and everyone on board the *Calypso*, that we would ask no questions and not try to discover anything about the defences of the island, and that if any of us discovered anything by accident, as you and I did last night, we would make no use of it either here or in England, and that when we got home we would tell nothing more about Utopia than the bare story of its existence."

"My dear fellow," said the Lieutenant reflectively, "you needn't allow your conscience to trouble you in the slightest on that score. You have given your word and of course you will keep it, and so shall I, just as though I had given my own. But even if you had not given it you would only produce a sensational panic by telling in England what we happened to learn last night.

"The fact of knowing that an air-ship exists would not help us in the slightest in building one for ourselves. If we had accidentally discovered the motive-power as well as the air-ship, then we should have a rather delicate problem in morals and expediency to solve. We should have to balance the keeping of a promise against the taking of the empire of the world, for, mind you, there is no burking the fact that the command of the air means, virtually, the control of the world.

"But without a knowledge of the motive-power we should just begin where everybody else has done, only with the tantalising knowledge that, while we were groping about in the dark, someone else was going ahead and building ship after ship, until they had a fleet that would make them strong enough to dictate terms of submission to the whole human race."

"Oh, come now, old man!" expostulated Sir Harry, somewhat aghast at this terrific prospect, "you can't mean all that. Really, I can't understand a sober, practical fellow like yourself talking in such a strain as that. Why, it would mean nothing less than the enslaving of humanity!"

"Goodness knows, I never was more serious in my life," replied Wyndham in a grave, slow tone. "I daresay you have never thought out seriously what the practical, workable solution of this problem of the navigation of the air really means, but I have, simply because it is part of my business, as an officer of the Navy, to take these possible developments into account, and try and realise the actual effect of them on warfare, and therefore, of course, on the relative powers of empires and states, and I can assure you, on the strength of some years' study and thought, that no other development of the art of war has brought the world face to face with such terrific possibilities as our discovery of last night tells us that humanity is now confronted with."

"What! not even the invention of gunpowder or steam navigation?" objected Sir Harry.

"My dear fellow, gunpowder and steam are not fit to be mentioned in the same breath with this, simply because it was impossible to keep the secret of them from the whole civilised world when the discoveries had once taken practical shape. With aërial navigation it is a very different business.

"You know as well as I do that, for the last hundred years and more, the brightest mechanical intellects in the world have been struggling with this problem and struggling unsuccessfully. Still, it has been solved. It's no good for you and me to attempt to deny that, and solved here in this out of the way, practically unknown part of the world. I remember hearing some months ago that Maxim had at last perfected his aeroplane; but even if that is true, it makes no difference to the facts. A simple air-ship like that one we saw could smash up any number of aeroplanes just like so many kites.

"Now," continued the Lieutenant, decreasing his pace as he became more and more didactic, "let me put the matter into a more concrete form. Here, in Utopia, is a small, self-contained colony of, say, a thousand men and women, with a proportionate number of children. They inhabit an island far out of the track of commerce, at any rate for the present, almost impregnable to any possible assault by sea, and, as far as we know, actually unknown to the maritime nations of the world.

"These people, openly despising all law and government, belonging to no nationality, voluntary outcasts, or perhaps, I ought to say, exiles from the pale of Society, possess one or more mechanical geniuses who have given them means of offence and defence against which even the whole naval strength of Britain, if it could be concentrated here on this spot, would contend in vain.

"Yes, I know that sounds a trifle extravagant, but wait a minute, and I'll make my case out. In the first place, take that *Nautilus* that we saw yesterday. It's no good hoping that she won't do what they expect her to do, because it would be absurd to believe that people who can build an air-ship to travel as fast as the one that we saw last night couldn't build a sea-going cruiser to travel forty knots an hour, and able to ram the biggest battle-ship we have, practically with impunity, to say nothing of her torpedo batteries, when she gets them.

"I saw quite enough of her to be convinced that her over-water platform and conning-tower might be knocked into smithereens without in the slightest hurting the ship herself. She would still get her ram home, and that means death and destruction to anything that floats. Then, again, no ship that floats could get within striking distance of her unless she chose. That's bad enough, you'll admit, but given the *Nautilus* in the water, and half-a-dozen of those air-ships cruising about a thousand feet over the mastheads of a hostile fleet, where would the fleet be?"

"I'll be hanged if I'd like to be on board any of the ships, now that I come to think of it," said Sir Harry seriously.

"Neither should I," said the Lieutenant, "for they would simply sink you in detail, and you could no more hit back than a boy with a catapult could reply effectively to a man armed with a magazine rifle on a cliff a thousand feet above him. That's the situation. You can't help being hit, and you can't strike back.

"And now let us go a step further. If these people can build one air-ship, they can build a dozen, a score, a hundred; and just try and imagine to yourself the position of London, or Paris, or New York with a hundred air-ships loaded up with explosives, some frightful thing, for instance, like this motor-fuel that they're going to drive the *Nautilus* with. Do you think they could resist? Not a bit of it! They would be absolutely helpless."

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"I don't quite see that," objected Sir Harry, with the air of a man driven back to his last line of defence; "there are such things as machine-guns and quick-firing cannon, which could be given plenty of elevation to catch them on the wing and bring them down like crippled partridges."

"Crippled partridges, my dear fellow," replied Wyndham drily, "are a very different kind of bird to air-ships that can travel at the speed we saw that one travel at last night. Added to that, partridges don't fly three or four thousand feet above the surface of the earth. At three thousand feet, or a thousand yards, you could no more hit one of those things than you could bring down an eagle in full flight with a bullet, and even if you could, what would be the result?

"You would simply bring down a ship-load of explosives about your ears, and get in ten seconds the concentrated effect of a couple of hours' bombardment. I tell you, either for a fleet or a city, there would be nothing for it but surrender or destruction if once a hostile squadron of air-ships got above it, as there would be nothing to prevent their doing. No fortifications would stop them, and a fortress would be as helpless as a farmyard. In a word, as I said before, those who command the air command the world, and that these Utopians practically do."

"Humph!" said Sir Harry, thrusting one hand deep into his trouser pocket, and with the other giving a pull to his moustache, "that's a pleasant sort of prospect, and the more I think of it the harder your arguments seem to be to answer. What the deuce would happen if our good friends the Utopians took it into their heads to build an aërial fleet and run amok generally?"

"Or, worse than that," said Wyndham, taking him by the arm, "what if these scoundrels who are making hay on the Atlantic in the *Destroyer* were to get hold of even this one air-ship that we know to be in existence, what then?"

"Oh, hang it, man, don't talk like that!" said Sir Harry, stopping short and pushing his cap back from his brow, on which Wyndham could distinctly see the beads of perspiration standing out, "the prospect's altogether too horrible to think about. Great heavens! Just imagine those miscreants holding up the Bank of England, and sending down a message, to say that if so many millions were not laid out for them in the middle of Salisbury Plain, within twenty-four hours, they'd come back and bombard the City at their leisure. Phew! It gives one a headache to think of it. But still, it's no use thinking, the question is, what are we to do?"

Wyndham let go Sir Harry's arm, thrust his hands deep into his trouser pockets, after the manner of Englishmen confronted with a knotty problem, and with down-bent head took several slow, deliberate strides in silence. Then he stopped abruptly, faced half-round towards Sir Harry, and said, in a tone his friend had never heard him use before:

"Look here, Milton, this is a serious matter, as I think I've shown you, and what makes it more serious, as far as I'm concerned, is that promise you gave before we came in here. First and foremost I'm an officer of the British Navy, and my allegiance to the Queen and my duty to the Service plainly demands that the knowledge I possess now shall not be kept to myself.

"More than that, I ought to add to it. I ought to find out something more. Even at the risk of my life I ought to attempt to find out where this air-ship is hidden during the day, to get on board her if possible, to learn everything I can about her, and not even to stop short at that, to capture her, if possible—by main force if necessary—and take her to England. On the other hand——"

"You are a gentleman," said Sir Harry, almost curtly, "and a man of honour, therefore you are neither a spy nor a thief to abuse the confidence of those who have made us their guests, or to steal their goods, even if the empire of the world does depend on their possession. No, Wyndham, that won't do. Patriotism is all very well to a certain extent, but a spy may be perfectly patriotic and yet you know very well that you would hang or shoot him the moment you got hold of him, and very properly too."

"Of course I should," said Wyndham, "and I should deserve just the same fate if I did what I said. Don't be afraid for me, old man. I'm not going to turn either spy or thief, but I'll tell you what I am going to do, with your permission."

"What's that?" asked Sir Harry. "You know I'm agreeable to anything a gentleman can do under the circumstances."

"Simply this I'm going to stop here until the *Nautilus* is ready for sea, and keep my eyes open in the meanwhile on things in general, and Mr. Max Renault in particular. I've seen that fellow somewhere before, and not under very creditable circumstances, but for the life of me I can't tell where it was. It was some time before I had that touch of fever in Africa, and I suppose that's wiped it out. However, that doesn't matter now. If the *Calypso* sails before the *Nautilus* and you go straight home to England, as I suppose you will, you shall take a letter from me to the Admiralty containing my resignation of my commission."

"What!" exclaimed Sir Harry, "surely you don't mean that?"

"Yes, I do," said Wyndham; "my mind is quite made up on that point. I must have a free hand in what I am going to do. I am going to join the Utopians, if they'll have me, and accept the berth they offered me on board the *Nautilus*. I couldn't do that if I remained in the Navy. There's no reason why I shouldn't be, at any rate, Navigating Lieutenant of her, then I'll take her home, get her armament on board, and hunt these piratical Anarchists off the face of the sea to begin with.

"By that time, I shall hope to be sufficiently deserving of the confidence of my fellow Utopians to be let into the secret of the air-ship, and then——"

"Hush!" whispered Sir Harry; "you are talking too loud. I believe I heard something move behind those bushes."

"Good morning, gentlemen! You are early abroad. I hope it isn't because you have slept badly. I presume you haven't breakfasted yet."

"Good morning, gentlemen."

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It was Renault who spoke. Turning round the corner of a clump of acacias, about twenty yards in front of them, he sauntered towards them, his hands in his pockets and a cigar between his teeth. Whether he had heard Wyndham's words or not it was impossible to guess; so far as any outward sign went, he had not. His manner was as frank and cordial as possible, and his greeting betrayed not the slightest sign of suspicion.

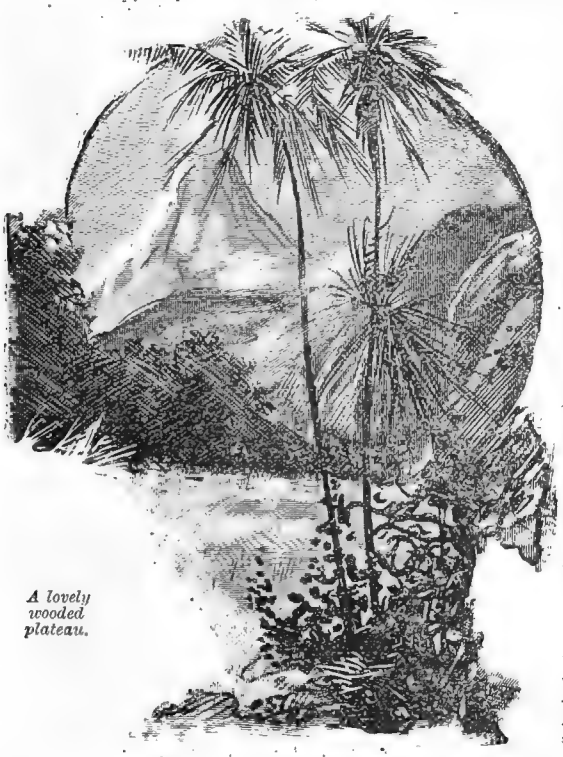
"I was just going down to the lagoon for a swim," he continued, "and I dare say you are looking for the same thing, so if you like to come with me I'll show you where the male Utopians take their morning dip. This way; the girls' bathing place is on the other side of that bluff."

So saying, he led the way round an abrupt turn in the pathway down towards the shore, followed by Sir Harry and Wyndham, who accepted his invitation as the best and readiest thing to do under the circumstances.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Picnic on Mount Plato.

A week had passed since the conversation just narrated, and during that time the repairing and refitting of the *Calypso* had made good progress and the work on the *Nautilus* had been prosecuted with such enthusiastic vigour—relays of those who were destined to be her crew literally working day and night at their tasks—that there was every prospect of its being possible to launch her within another fortnight.



A lovely wooded plateau.

In addition to this, the visitors to Utopia had been made so completely at home by the members of the Colony, and had so rapidly and so insensibly got on terms of the closest friendship with them, that they already began to look forward with undisguised regret to the time when circumstances would make it necessary for them to say good-bye. Guests and hosts mingled in the most unreserved intercourse and the more the former saw of the latter and their delightfully simple and natural institutions and mode of life, the more firmly they became convinced that they had by no means done an unwise thing in forsaking the complications and multifarious worries of what is, more in courtesy than in truth, called civilisation, for a life which seemed to give all the good that the world had to offer, with none of the discount of over or under-living taken off.

For obvious reasons, the crew of the *Calypso* were not accorded all these privileges, as it was rightly taken for granted that their intellectual and moral education had hardly progressed far enough to permit of their even temporary admission to a society that owned no laws save individual choice, and no customs save those established by the unrestrained friendliness of the people, whose perfect confidence in each other enabled them to do without the ordinary restraints of conventionality.

They were accommodated with comfortable quarters near the dockyard, convenient for going and coming to and from the work that they had to do on board the yacht, and they were supplied with everything in the way of comfort and luxuries that the island could afford, but sea discipline was strictly maintained by Sir Harry and his officers, and they were given to understand that the same rules which forbade their going into the saloon of the yacht at sea prevented their taking up quarters in the settlement, or mixing with the colonists as Sir Harry and their officers did.

It is true that one or two grumblers among them, when they got a notion of the principles of social equality on which the colony was founded, objected rather strongly to this hard and fast line being drawn, but the majority of them, with the natural obedience of good sailors to order and discipline, tacitly admitted that the yacht had been brought into harbour under certain conditions, and saw that they had not the slightest right to abuse the hospitality that was accorded to them, by infringing the terms that their employer had accepted.

Their agreement was made all the more easy by the fact that Sir Harry had promised everyone double wages during the time that they were in the island, on the condition of order being strictly maintained, and as this would have been forfeited by a single outbreak of bad manners, public opinion very soon proved too strong for the grumblers.

Nothing more had been seen of the mysterious air-ship, and, of course, Sir Harry and the Lieutenant had kept their own counsel strictly. Night after night they had taken their stroll from their bungalow, which lay nearly a mile from the centre of the settlement up towards the foot-hills, but their expectations, if they had any, were disappointed. Wherever the wonderful cruiser of the air was, she was carefully hidden from sight, and as not the slightest restraint was put upon their movements about the island, they were forced to conclude that those who were in the secret had every confidence in the security of the hiding-place.

Day after day came and went all too swiftly for the liking of the visitors, in a round of busy work and healthy, innocent enjoyment. By the time the week had passed, such good progress had been made with the work that, in accordance with the custom of Utopia, it was decided to spend New Year's Day, 1899, as a general holiday.

The dockyard was closed for twenty-four hours; Markham and half-a-dozen of his friends undertook to provide for the entertainment of the crew of the yacht, under the ordering eye of Mr. Topline; and Adams and Mr. Austen, acting on a suggestion which originated with Dora, who appeared to have, in one sense, quite carried out her promise of making Violet a sister for the period of her visit, organised a picnic of exploration to the slopes of Mount Plato.

There were about a score of sturdy Shetland ponies and as many sleek, well-fed donkeys on the island, which were both useful and properly-respected members of the community, and half-a-dozen of each of them were pressed into the service of the expedition to carry the eatables and drinkables, and to be ready, if necessary, for the use of any of the ladies—as Wyndham and Sir Harry felt bound to persist in calling them, in defiance of Utopian custom—in case, as was not very likely, they were overtaken by fatigue on the way.

A start was made just as the cone of Mount Plato was beginning to glow in the first beams of the rising sun, and the spot selected for the camping ground—a lovely, wooded plateau 2,000 feet above the sea and some seven miles from the Settlement—was reached in less than a couple of hours. Here they sat down to a second breakfast in which some choice champagne from the stores of the *Calypso* played a pleasantly conspicuous part, and then the party split up automatically into groups in accordance with individual choices and varying projects.

Sir Harry and the Lieutenant had come out with the inten-

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tion of climbing the cone of Mount Plato as the principal object of the day's excursion, and as this would take nearly the whole day, allowing for dinner and the necessary siesta after it, a separate party was formed for the expedition consisting of the visitors, Dora Merton, Lucy Summers, and Adams, who had volunteered to act as guide and general cicerone. A paniered donkey carried the wherewithal for dinner in the crater, and a pony was laden with a small tent and the necessary fittings to provide shelter in case the mountain was visited by one of the sudden storms which sometimes swept across its upper heights.

It was not very long before the party, small as it was, split up into three divisions, which made their way in somewhat extended order along the steep, narrow hill-paths which led to the summits. Adams and Lucy, for reasons best known to themselves, formed the first of these, and Sir Harry and Dora the last.

It may also be recorded that there was an interval of nearly a hundred yards between each division, an arrangement which seemed perfectly satisfactory to everybody, though, if the truth must be told, Adams would fain have changed places with Sir Harry for, in the depths of his serious, practical soul, there lurked a not very well-based hope that some day this brown-eyed beauty, who so far had contented herself with setting hearts aflame with the carelessness of a delightful unconsciousness, might accept the homage of the man whom everyone tacitly accepted as the moving spirit and virtual leader of the Utopians.

Interesting as the conversation *en route* undoubtedly was to the young baronet, it would have been even more so had it been possible for him to have asked Dora point-blank, as he would dearly have liked to have done, whether or not she knew of the existence of the air-ship, and, if yes, how much she knew or would tell about it.

He could hardly bring himself to believe that this lovely, innocent, light-hearted girl—for in just such terms did his thought describe her to him during that momentous walk—could be burdened with the possession of a secret on which the peace and security of the world might well one day depend; and yet that such actually was the case he was destined to learn before many minutes had passed. A sharp turn in the path brought them suddenly in view of a second truncated cone, about five hundred feet lower than that of Mount Plato, and lying as nearly as he could guess some two miles to the eastward of it, separated from it by a valley so deep as to give it the appearance of a distinct mountain.

"I didn't know Utopia boasted two volcanoes," he said, stopping and looking round over the magnificent panorama which now lay at their feet. "What do you call that second one yonder?"

"That," said Dora, glancing half shyly up at him with a quick flush that seemed in curious contrast with the simplicity of the question he had asked, "that is what I believe they call a secondary crater to Mount Plato, and—well, I'm afraid that's all I am at liberty to tell you about it. If I invent a suitable name for it and call it, for present purposes, Mount Mystery, you will understand me, won't you?"

"Of course I shall," replied Sir Harry, flushing in his turn, and slightly inclining his head as though in apology; "and I hope that you will understand that I trenched upon the forbidden ground quite unintentionally."

"There can be no question of that," she said with a smile, that awoke in him an unreasoning, and yet not altogether unnatural, desire to embrace the principles of the Utopians on the spot, if he could only embrace her with them, and abjure home, country, and capitalism thenceforth and for ever, for the sake of the only pair of bright eyes that had ever taught him what the magic and mystery of sex really meant.

They were walking on again now, for somehow Sir Harry had no desire that his sister and Wyndham should overtake them too closely, and by way of shifting the conversation from dangerous ground, he said, after a little interval of silence:

"Do you know, Miss Dora, I am rapidly coming to the belief that you Utopians have really chosen the better part of life, by leaving the world and all its bothers, and coming out to this paradise of yours to live, as I suppose men and women really were intended to live and would have lived, if the curse of Eden had never been laid upon them."

"Of course we have," she replied in a tone which showed that, to her at least, there could be no question about it. "I believe the curse of Eden, in its modern form, at any rate, is simply the spirit of greediness and vain-glory which makes every man want to have more and be something grander than his neighbour. Of course, Nature did not make all men and women equal. We are not by any means equal here even. Naturally, some of us are cleverer, stronger, or more—more——"

"Beautiful, for instance."

There was no mistaking the look that accompanied Sir Harry's completion of her speech, and she didn't pretend to do so. She looked him frankly in the eyes, and only a deepening of the colour on her pretty cheeks told him that she had taken his interruption as literally as he had intended it to be taken.

"Yes, Sir Harry, more beautiful, if you like to put it so. It would be absurd to expect it, and that is why we haven't attempted to bring any of the silly theories of what they call Socialism in England, out here with us. We simply believe it to be possible for people to live healthy, natural lives, and develop themselves physically and mentally as far as their powers go, without troubling their heads about all the foolish complications of Society, with its different ranks and degrees of wealth and poverty.

"Still, I must say I am rather surprised at *you* finding our life here better than the one at home. I always thought that for a man like yourself, rich, titled, young, and—well, yes—good-looking, there's your compliment back for you—the social life of England made earth as nearly Paradise as possible."

She looked him frankly in the eyes.

"Not always," replied Sir Harry, laughing outright at the direct frankness of her unconventional speech. "Of course, fellows like myself have a very good time of it, better, I daresay, than most of us deserve; but still I must say that I have found something in Utopia that I not only never found anywhere else, but never even thought of before. I can't exactly say what it is, because it's so strange to me, and yet it seems something better than anything that either money or position could buy at home."

"Perhaps it's just a healthy atmosphere, social as well as physical," she suggested. "You know we can breathe freely here; and we live, we don't play at it, or pretend to be something else than we really are, as I used to think people did when I lived in England."

"I daresay that's it," replied Sir Harry, looking at her with admiring conviction as he spoke, "only you put it more concretely than I thought it. I verily believe you will end by persuading us all to become Utopians before the *Calypso* is ready for sea again. As for Violet, you seem to have put her quite out of conceit with the old order of things already. I shouldn't be at all surprised to see her turn out, some fine morning, in that delightfully picturesque costume of yours."

"Ah, wouldn't she look nice in it?" said Dora, with an added sparkle in her eyes at the very thought of such a

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conversion. "That's all that's wanted to make her quite the prettiest girl on the island."

"Save one," retorted Sir Harry, "but then, of course, you speak unselfishly."

"I'm afraid you've brought at least one of the bad habits of fashionable Society with you," replied Dora demurely, but yet flushing rosy red again, not altogether with displeasure. "But suppose we walk a little faster. There is Mr. Adams beckoning to us. They're waiting to show you the way into the crater."

It will not be difficult to surmise, from the tone of this conversation that the young Lord of Seaton Abbey was in a fair way of meeting his fate in the far-away spot to which the Fates and his disabled yacht had brought him. What the course of his future fortune might have been, if what, on his part at least was something more than a chance flirtation, had been allowed to pursue its course in peace, can never be known, for only a few hours after they were walking, laughing and chatting thus up the mountain side, there fell, like a bolt from the blue, a swift and sudden calamity upon the little community of Utopia, which woke it with awful suddenness and violence from its dream of Paradise on earth.

The party dined together in the crater of Mount Plato, and then, as before, separated into pairs which seemed to prefer the amusement of independent exploration. Shortly before five, Adams hailed Sir Harry, and said that it was high time for them to set about returning to the plateau, if they didn't want to be left behind. Sir Harry agreed, and promptly sent forth a lusty "Halloo," which echoed round the walls of the crater, as a signal to Wyndham and Violet to join them.

There was no answer. They halloed again, this time in chorus, and only the echoes replied. Then on consultation, they learned that none of them had seen the missing pair all the afternoon. Fearing that they might have strayed away and got lost, they made a rapid exploration of the crater, and then, not finding them there, went out on to the mountain side, and continued their search, Adams and Sir Harry still hallooing as they went.

They searched for an hour without success, and then, when the four met once more at the entrance to the crater, as the sun was beginning to sink behind the opposite western wall, Adams said, "It's no use. They must have gone back to the others for some reason, and yet—I can't understand why they should have done so. Why, what's the matter, Sir Harry? Are you ill?"

"Look! Look!" cried Sir Harry, whose ruddy, bronzed face had suddenly turned to an almost ashen colour. He grasped him by the arm as he spoke, and turned him half round, pointing with his other hand to the secondary cone which Dora had rightly named the Mount Mystery. Instantly all eyes were fixed in a silent stare of amazement and horror on the round ragged hole that marked the smaller crater.

Out of the black depths, they saw, soaring swiftly and vertically upwards, the strange shape of the mysterious air-ship which Sir Harry and the Lieutenant had seen crossing the hills a week before. They thought they made out something white moving to and fro on its deck. It seemed to sway violently about for a moment or two, and then pitch headlong out of sight into the black gulf beneath. The next moment the air-ship leapt several hundred feet up into the air, and then in a long sweeping upward curve, darted away out over the sea to the north-westward.

(To be continued next week.)

WE MEET, BOW, SMILE, PASS.

I HAD been living since my birth, fifty-five years ago, in an old-fashioned house left to me by my father. It contained several apartments, the best of them rented to the family of an old schoolfellow of mine, who had seen some sad days.

A financial crisis had impoverished him, and made it necessary for him to look for less expensive quarters. Being a lonely bachelor, and feeling at home in his family, I invented some excuse for lowering the rent, and thus I kept my friend with me.

His wife and daughter seemed overwhelmed with my kindness, showed great feeling, and I had many invitations to take dinner with them. Who would not have been charmed with so much attention from two beautiful ladies?

My own apartments were on the third floor. I had cut off two rooms from them, which were rented to two sisters. One was a forewoman in a large establishment, the other a weak, gentle girl, who sewed at home, as I judged from seeing her at her window, always with a needle in her hand.

One day she was gone, but I cared nothing about them. The rent was paid promptly, and I had never seen much of them.

New Year's Day was drawing near, and, according to my usual custom, I wandered from shop to shop in search of something original and costly for my little friend, my school-friend's daughter. Little? Why, now she was a young lady, nineteen years old. Next month she would make her *début*, and I must find some pretty jewel to heighten her beauty.

I know she is rather vain and superficial, but all young ladies of her age are more or less vain—and I try to find some excuse for her. The mother, a Society woman, has had very little time to educate the heart of the daughter.

Time will help, I think, as I stop here and there to admire the exquisite gems displayed in the windows to tempt the buyers. Finally, I see just what I want—a ring of rubies and diamonds. I remember how the girl has talked about this very ring with a longing sigh. How could I have overlooked the plain hint that child has given me?

I buy the ring with a childish joy, and have stowed it carefully in my pocket. I walk out of the shop to find myself face to face with the mother and daughter, who, with an enchanting smile and friendly salute, hurry on their way.

I feel like a scholar caught by his teacher with a cigarette in his mouth, and I actually put my hand in my pocket to hide more effectually the surprise it contains.

I wander leisurely home to find the wife of my hall-porter in an excited state.

"Oh, sir, what shall we do?" she says. "The girl on the third floor is very ill, and the doctor has just left saying that she will not probably live another hour."

"She must be taken to the hospital," I answer in a very positive tone. "See to it at once."

I walk upstairs feeling in a certain measure sorry for the poor girl. But I soon forget her. She is only a stranger, and, no doubt, better dead than suffering, and the hospital is a very good place, so I have heard.

I now remember my purchase, and, admiring it again in its velvet case, I lock it in my closet to wait for the happy New Year's day.

Lighting a cigarette, I sit at my window, dreaming of days gone by, when I had thought of a plain gold ring to adorn a dear little white hand. I was only a student then, and full of enthusiasm. My father's objection cooled my warm heart, and I soon became an inveterate bachelor, and a very selfish man, with only my own pleasure to consider, and no one to care for. Some men are far less fortunate.

And so I sit and forget even time. In a week and a half it will be the New Year. I am invited to my friend's for the Christmas dinner the day after to-morrow.

The bell rings suddenly, and with an unwonted violence. Who can it be? Rose, my old housekeeper—she has been thirty-seven years with my family—opens the sitting-room door and says:

"Please, sir, a lady wants to see you."

"Let her come in, Rose." I rise to meet the visitor, but a flush of annoyance comes to my face; it is my third floor lodger.

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"What can I do for you, madam?"

"A great deal, sir. Please, oh, please, take back the order to send my sister to the hospital! I could not go with her, and it would kill her."

I look at the tall, dignified figure before me. She stands because I have not offered her a seat. Where is my courtesy? I am ashamed, and I hastily push an arm-chair toward her.

"No, thank you; my sister is ill and needs me. I have only time to come and tell you that she cannot leave the house."

Her tone vexes me, it is so decided.

"I beg your pardon, she must go, for I do not wish to have a death in my house, especially not in these days when my friends——."

But, heavens! what is that? The woman reels, and I have barely time to prevent her from falling to the ground. What a brute I am! How could I speak so carelessly about a death which would leave her all alone, and take from her her dearest and best friend. I should never, never forgive myself.

Rose is near at hand, and with her help I am soon relieved by seeing Miss Casanova open her eyes again. As soon as she is about to stand, she says, in a low but cold voice, "I am sorry. Pardon the trouble I have given you, sir," and, without another word, she walks out like one in a dream, with a terribly bitter smile on her lips.

I felt so guilty that I stood like a statue, without a word of apology. When she was out of sight I felt vexed at the part I had played in the tragedy, and to console myself I went down to my friend's to talk it over.

Just as I was about to pull the bell, the door was opened by the maid, who was letting out a messenger with some parcels. I was such an everyday guest that she allowed me to step into the drawing-room and went about her own work.

This room was divided from a second one by a portière. Hearing voices in the next room I concluded that there was a visitor there, and I sat down, busy with my own perplexity, and waited for the lady of the house. Ten minutes must have passed, when I was recalled to myself by the sound of my own name. I rose voluntarily, but no one came, and I sat down again, while the voice went on:

"I'm sure I don't mind the harmless old fool, mamma, but can't we have one New Year's dinner without him? We need another lady if you insist on having him, and our dining-room is not very large."

"But, child," I hear the mother say, "how can we offend him? I do not care to have him, but he always sends such nice presents and flowers. And then he might raise the rent. Papa says we must be polite."

Since my dear mother's death, though it is long ago, I have never felt so lonely and forlorn as now. I must go out, I must walk, I must see people. I rush down the stairs, and, in my impetuosity, nearly knock down two men who are coming in.

The hall-porter's wife directs them upstairs, and, turning to me, she said:

"The cab from the hospital."

I forget my age and my usually dignified walk, and hurry up stairs, calling all the way, "Stop! Wait! Do not go on!" And I heave a sigh of intense relief as one man turns his head. They wait, I actually believe, with a suspicion that I am out of my mind, for I hold my hat in my hand and must look almost wild with excitement.

The men accepted my explanation, thanking me politely, and depart with a lurking doubt as to my sanity. But what do I care? The poor girl is safe. I wonder how she is. Perhaps she knows of my heartlessness and dreads the arrival of the ambulance. Will Miss Casanova ever forgive me? She looks so proud—like a queen more than like a bread-winner.

Presently the doctor comes into my library. I find that he is an acquaintance of mine.

"How is the invalid?"

"She has pneumonia, but I am glad to see a slight change for the better to-night."

"Thank God!" I say with a profoundly sincere accent.

"I did not know you were acquainted with them."

"Poor girls. I do not know them, but I am sorry for the poor sufferer."

"The sufferer, as you call her, is the least to be pitied. The older one is a heroine. I knew her in Florence when she was still the much-sought daughter of the rich banker Casanova.

"He had a second wife, and a little girl by this second marriage. Do you remember his complete ruin? It was followed by his death. His wife became an invalid from sorrow, and Miss Casanova, left with two helpless people on her hands, sought in vain for paying work.

"Florence attracted her, and she decided to try a place where no one knew of her former life. She began at the very beginning, living a life of sacrifice, but soon reaching a better position by her industry and intelligence.

"The mother died, blessing the faithful heart, sure that the delicate child left in her sister's care would be safe, and I shall spare no trouble to cure her."

And these were the women I wanted to send away!

I thanked the doctor, and begged him to let me know if I could do anything for my lodger. Then, under a sudden burst of confidence, I confessed to the doctor my heartlessness, and how I had deeply regretted my behaviour. Would Miss Casanova ever forgive me?

The doctor looked almost severe, and rising, said: "Try and make amends by leaving the two ladies from this time unmolested."

He said good-bye without much cordiality.

The next day a bouquet was bought of beautiful fresh-cut roses. It was intended for my friends downstairs, but I sent it to Miss Casanova. It came back with regrets:

"The perfume might hurt her sick sister."

A proud girl, Miss Casanova. I never asked after them, but I allowed Rose to give me news, which she did so discreetly that it seemed quite her own wish to inform me, while I was really thinking of nothing else all day.

The summons came to me from downstairs, but I pleaded a bad cold, and ate my lonely dinner with gusto, to the high delight of Rose, who could hardly believe it to be true. The invalid became daily better.

New Year's Eve arrived, and I heard that all danger was passed, with as much pleasure as if she had been a near and dear relative. Rose was the bearer of the good news. Then she confessed that she had carried the sick young lady every day some broth, chicken, or mutton, also beef-tea. To-day she had broiled a little leg of chicken. I listen, then I jump up.

"And she has not refused?" I break out. "Not refused? She has accepted, Rose?"

"Yes, sir, and to-day she has gone to take some work to the shop; so I sat with the dear, sweet young lady in order that she might not be left alone."

"Oh, you dear, good Rose! Then you have softened the cruelty of your master?"

Somehow I do not care now to be alone. Of course I sent an excuse for my absence from the New Year's dinner of my old friend. I enjoy better eating by myself.

A year has gone. Where is the poor, lonely, tolerated bachelor? Alas! he is no more.

He sits gravely, a happy husband, and nods joyfully at Rose as she announces dinner.

"Doctor, your arm to Miss Casanova, and take her to dinner."

"Miss Casanova" is a dainty, delicate little damsel, for the other Miss Casanova is my own sweet wife. She has forgiven me.

Rose, all smiles, stands in the door. I really believe she is as happy as we are.

As the doctor is to be my brother-in-law, he has decided to lay down his arms, and be as forgiving as the rest. My friend downstairs is still there, but he leaves soon in order to make room for us. We meet, we bow, we smile, and pass.

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AFRAID OF HER DINNER.

"Only a coward," said General Sir Thomas Picton, "will boast that he was never afraid." These are remarkable words to come from a man like him. Whatever Sir Thomas's faults may have been, timidity was not among them, as he proved down to the moment when he fell at Waterloo. We have heard of great generals afraid to cross a narrow bridge. The famous Duke of Marlborough was afraid of his wife, and with good reason. Some folks are afraid of ghosts, and some of new ideas. Here is a lady who was afraid to eat. Most of us will face a good dinner with a fair amount of courage; but we, luckily, are not in the condition of Mrs. Lucy Booth, at the time of which she writes.

"In the spring of 1888," she says, "I began to feel weak and ailing. My appetite was poor, and after all I ate I had great pain at the chest and left side. My hands and feet were cold and clammy, and I was so pale that I seemed to have no blood left in me. As time went on I got worse and worse, and became afraid to eat owing to the pain. I got so weak that I could scarcely get about. I saw a doctor from time to time, who gave me medicine, but I got no better. I also went to Nantwich for change of air, but nothing did me any good. After suffering in this way for nearly a year, my father persuaded me to try a medicine that had cured him, called Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. After I had taken one bottle of it I felt relief, and by continuing its use a short time all pain left me, and I gained back my old strength. My husband, who had suffered from indigestion for years, has been benefited by the same medicine. Whenever we ail anything, a few doses of Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup soon set us right. You may make what use you like of this statement. (Signed) (Mrs.) Lucy Booth, 6, Union Street, Runcorn, February 9th, 1894."

After reading this story, nobody, we are sure, will criticise Mrs. Booth because she was afraid to eat. One is not a coward because he refuses to swallow poison, and that's what food soon becomes when it lies in the stomach without being digested. Cautious people frequently keep firearms in their bedrooms as a defence against intruders. Mrs. Booth is armed with Mother Seigel's Syrup against indigestion and dyspepsia, an enemy more to be dreaded than any midnight thief.

Now, lay to heart the simple thing I am going to tell you:—Nature, the wise mother of us all, never makes it hard to do what is necessary to be done. Not a bit. On the contrary, she makes necessary things easy and pleasant to do. You breathe without thinking of it; your heart beats without any supervision or care on your part; when you are thirsty she makes it a pure delight to drink; when you are tired and weary she lays her soft hand upon your face, and whispers, "*Sleep, my child, sleep, and forget the world!*" When you need food she stirs up within you what we (lacking a better word) call an appetite, and eating becomes a supreme satisfaction.

Well, then, what are we to think of ourselves when we turn from food as a woman turns from her dead baby? Why, this, to be sure: that something has outraged and thwarted nature. What has done it? The disease called indigestion or dyspepsia. "Oh," you say, "we know all about that; it never kills anybody." Doesn't it? Does famine never kill anybody? What filled the air of Ireland with wailing and keening away back in 1848? What—but, pshaw!—the point is sharp enough to prick your fingers.

Whether a man is hungry and has no food, or has plenty of food, but is prevented by disease from eating and digesting it—*he starves just the same.* "In nine-tenths of all fatal cases of disease," says an eminent medical writer, "the final cause of death is starvation. The digestion fails, and death ensues sooner or later. The human body must succumb unless constantly sustained by food."

True, and dyspepsia is slow starvation—the source of most of the other diseases that fill us with pain and misery.

As a cure, I point to the record of Mother Seigel's Syrup.

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